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lunar spectra were equally intense; plainly signifying that the observed bands were due to water vapor in the earth's atmosphere above the summit of Mt. Whitney. This does not mean that Mars has no water vapor, but only that the quantity present, if any, must be very slight. Let us recall that we see Mars by reflected sunlight. The rays which reached our instruments passed from the sun into the Martian atmosphere, for the most part down to the surface of the planet, and then out again to us, thus passing twice through the planet's atmosphere and any water vapor it may contain. Even with this multiplying effect on Mars the vapor bands in the Martian and lunar spectra were alike, and we conclude that any water vapor in the Martian atmosphere must have been much less extensive than was contained in the rarefied and remarkably dry air strata above Mt. Whitney.

These observations do not prove that life does not or can not exist on Mars. The question of life under these conditions is the biologist's problem rather than the astronomer's.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

DR. IRA REMSEN, president of the National Academy of Sciences, has consented, at the request of Dr. H. F. Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History and Mr. Archer Huntington, president of the American Geographical Society, to appoint a scientific commission to examine the records of Lieutenant Peary and Dr. Cook, in case they are ready to present them to such a commission. Lieutenant Peary has accepted the suggestion, and it is reported that Dr. Cook will under certain conditions also accept.

THE mayor of Baltimore has nominated Dr. William H. Welch, of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, as a member of the new charter commission.

THE University of Manchester has conferred an honorary doctorate on Dr. Otto Wallach, professor of organic chemistry in the University of Gothenberg.

AN international committee has been formed to celebrate the fortieth year of university work of Professor Henrico H. Giglioni, professor of zoology at Florence.

MR. R. PRIESTLEY, who left University College, Bristol, to join Mr. Shackleton's Antarctic expedition as geologist, has left England for Australia on October 22. He intends to join Professor Edgeworth David, F.R.S., at Sydney University, to work up the geological results of the expedition.

WE learn from *The Journal of Terrestrial Magnetism* that the Norwegian Storthing has voted to Professor Birkeland 5,000 kroners annually for four years, making a total of 20,000 kroners (about 5,300 dollars), thus enabling him to continue the publication of his investigations on magnetic storms and polar lights.

PROFESSOR CHARLES JOSIAH SMITH, of the chair of mathematics of Western Reserve University, has been given leave of absence for the year.

DR. CHARLES H. MAYO, of Rochester, Minn., will deliver two lectures at the University of Maryland, on November 9 and 10, on "Diseases of the Thyroid Gland," and on academic day he will receive from the university the honorary doctorate of laws.

ON the opening of the graduate school of the University of Pennsylvania, on September 30, Dr. Thomas H. Montgomery made an address on "The Making of the Investigator."

MR. JOHN BIRKINBINE, president of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, will give a lecture at Lehigh University during the present month on "The Relation of the Engineering Profession to Forest Preservation." This lecture and others have been made possible by a special gift for increasing interest in forestry.

THE valuable scientific library of the late Professor Simon Newcomb has been purchased by Mr. John Claflin for the College of the City of New York.

THE death is announced of Dr. Anton Dohrn, founder and director of the Biological Station at Naples, and eminent for his contributions to zoology.

DR. MAX HEINZE, professor of philosophy at the University of Leipzig, known for his important publications on the history of philos-

ophy, died on September 17, at the age of seventy-three years.

Mr. Bryan Cookson, assistant at the Cambridge Observatory, has died at the age of thirty-six years.

A bronze tablet, three by two feet, has been installed in the building of the New York Aquarium, it being the New York Zoological Society's contribution to the Hudson-Fulton Celebration. The tablet is inscribed:

This building first known as West Battery, erected 1807–1811—Called Castle Clinton after the war of 1812—Ceded by Congress to New York City 1823—Subsequently known as Castle Garden —General Lafayette received here 1824, President Jackson 1832, Kossuth 1851, the Prince of Wales 1860—Jenny Lind first sang here 1850—The landing place of eight million immigrants, 1855–1890 —Connected with the land by a bridge prior to 1869—Converted into an Aquarium 1896—Placed under control of New York Zoological Society 1902—Aquarium visitors twenty-one million to 1909.

The last legislature of North Dakota passed a comprehensive pure seed law intended to regulate the sale of agricultural and garden seeds, providing for proper labeling of such seeds, and for the establishment of a Seed Control Laboratory at the North Dakota Agricultural College, in connection with the department of botany. Dean H. L. Bolley was made state seed commissioner and Mr. Orin A. Stevens, of the Agricultural College of Kansas, was elected assistant in charge of the laboratory. The laboratory is well equipped for all types of seed investigation and opened for work on October 1.

At a meeting of the board of directors of the American Chemical Society held at the Chemists' Club, New York, on September 13, it was voted that an additional amount not to exceed seven hundred dollars be appropriated for the purposes of the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* for the balance of the fiscal year provided that no issue of the journal to which this appropriation is to apply shall exceed sixty-four pages exclusive of advertisements and cover. The amount of material offered for publication having become so great, it was voted that the directors recommend that the editors of both journals should not feel obliged to print all matter that passes their respective boards, but should conduct their journals from the standpoint of those who read rather than from that of those who write, making a selection of those articles which, having passed their boards, are in their opinion of the greatest value to chemical science and industry.

The London *Times* states that a group of French, German and Belgian patrons of aviation are offering a prize of 250,000 f. (£10,000) to be awarded to the aviator who rises, with a fixed point as center, to a height of 250 meters, flies a thousand meters from this altitude in a horizontal direction, and finally, returning, soars for a quarter of an hour at a height of 20 meters over the point of departure. An alternative feat is to make a flight from Brussels to Paris or from Brussels to Cologne, without a stop, at a speed of 60 kilometers an hour. At Spa the final preparations for the competition have now been made, and MM. Paulhan, Sommer, Druet, Delagrange and Le Blond have their machines ready in their sheds for the trials.

The New York *Evening Post* states that Dr. Paul Vouger, of the Museum of Neuchatel, Switzerland, has given the archeological branch of Peabody Museum, of Yale University, two cases of prehistoric implements in stone, iron, horn and bronze. A collection of Indian antiquities has been received from G. W. Rittenour, '09. By an exchange there has been received from Stockholm, Sweden, an ethnographical collection made among the African tribes of the Congo. From the Egyptian exploration fund has come a collection from the tombs at Mahaska and Abydos. It includes articles in ivory, vases, beads, ornaments, palettes and pottery.

In the Public Health Reports for August 27, 1909, appears an article on "Plague among Ground Squirrels in Contra Costa County, California." In 1894 plague began to spread from central Asia. Since then it has been carried to practically all parts of the world, including the Pacific Coast of the United States, where the disease has appeared in man,

in rats and in ground squirrels. The infection in ground squirrels has so far appeared in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, California, chiefly the former, where, up to September 10, 1909, 220 plague-infected squirrels had been found. The Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service is attempting to destroy all the ground squirrels in the involved area, or at least to so reduce them in number that the plague infection among them will die out of its own accord. This article gives a detailed account of plague infection among the ground squirrels in Contra Costa County, and the relation of squirrel plague to plague in man. It also describes the means employed for the destruction of the squirrels, and gives a serial list of infected squirrels with the location where found. The article has been reprinted, and a limited edition is available for distribution to those interested. Requests for copies should be made to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, Washington, D. C.

A BILL to promote the economic development of the United Kingdom and the improvement of the roads was introduced in the House of Commons on August 26 by the chancellor of the exchequer. In the explanatory memorandum, as summarized in *Nature*, it is stated that the bill enables the treasury to make free grants and loans for the purpose of aiding and developing forestry, agriculture and rural industries, the reclamation and drainage of land, the improvement of rural transport (other than roads), the construction and improvement of harbors and canals, and the development and improvement of fisheries, and for many other purposes calculated to promote the economic development of the United Kingdom. A grant or loan must be made either to or through a government department, and all applications for grants or loans have to be referred to an advisory committee, and the recommendations of the committee considered before the grant or loan is made; but the responsibility of making the grant or loan will rest with the treasury, who will not be bound by the recommendations of the committee. All grants and loans will be made out of a separate fund, which will be fed by (1) sums annually voted by parliament; (2) a sum of £2,500,000 charged on the consolidated fund and payable in five annual instalments of £500,000 each in 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1915; (3) sums received by way of interest on and repayment of loans and the profits made as the result of a grant or loan in cases where the repayment of such profits is made a condition of the grant or loan. Power is given to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland to acquire land (compulsory if necessary) for any purpose for which a grant is made to them. The bill will permit the expenditure of money on scientific research and experimental work of a kind likely to be beneficial to agriculture. The bill further constitutes a Road Board for the purpose of improving the facilities for motor traffic. In addition to the power of acquiring land for the purposes of new roads proposed to be constructed by the Road Board, the board is given power to acquire land in rural districts on either side of any such proposed road to the extent of 220 yards in depth.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY has received $15,000 from Mrs. James Augustus Rumrill, to establish three scholarships.

THE alumni fund of Yale University was increased last year by $73,000, the total fund now being $361,000.

AN anonymous gift of $250,000 has been made toward providing a pension fund for teachers in the public schools of Pittsburgh.

EX-GOVERNOR JAMES D. PORTER, LL.D., has resigned the presidency of Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee, which office he has held for seven years. The duties of the office have been assigned to Dr. J. I. D. Hinds, professor of chemistry, and for several years dean of the college faculty. Dr. Hinds will hold this position until a president is elected by the trustees of the New George Peabody College for Teachers, which is now in the process of organization. Governor Por-